

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

June 29, 2010

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President Obama and Indonesian Leader Discuss Climate, Education

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono June 27 on the sidelines of the Group of 20 Summit to discuss a climate change initiative and joint educational programs.

Senior U.S. officials told reporters just before the president left for the Group of 20 Summit in Canada that the president believes the U.S. presence in East Asia is vitally important during a period of emerging powers. “It is seen by virtually everyone in the region as a stabilizing force and therefore welcome,” senior officials said at a background briefing.

At a press conference with Obama, Yudhoyono told reporters that “stable, dynamic and strong relations between Indonesia and the [United States] is good for our region and for the world.”

The United States is working with Indonesia to create a climate change study center that will support research within Indonesia, the region and globally. The United States is providing \$7 million for development of the center and \$10 million for related projects, Obama said. The climate change center will work closely with national and local authorities and the private sector, linking science to policy on strategic climate priorities, and focusing initially on emissions from peat lands, according to a White House fact sheet.

The education initiative includes \$165 million for joint programs aimed at enhancing youth education in Indonesia over five years. Included are exchange programs for leadership and management expertise, scientific and technical expertise, and enhancing cultural understanding between Americans and Indonesians, the president said.

The initiative expands current exchange programs, State Department English-language training, student advising services, and a major five-year effort to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia through a partnership program between U.S. and Indonesian universities, the White House said. And the United States is sponsoring a higher education summit to advance cooperation in education.

“Indonesia and America are entering and developing a comprehensive partnership which is elevating and transforming our relations based on the equal partnership, and aim to meet the challenges of the 21st century: promoting peace, reforming the world economy

[and] addressing climate change,” Yudhoyono told reporters.

A senior administration official told reporters before the summit that the United States is building what it calls “a comprehensive partnership” with Indonesia that is befitting for “a country of this magnitude with whom we have not had the strongest relations in the past.”

The U.S.-Indonesian partnership includes cooperative programs between the U.S. Defense Department and Indonesia’s Ministry of Defense; a \$1 billion credit facility in partnership between the U.S. Export-Import Bank and 11 Indonesian banks designed to foster bilateral trade; advances in science and technology cooperation; a clean air project with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Jakarta regional government; and expanded strategic talks between Indonesian officials and the U.S. Department of State.

President Obama: A Durable Economy Must Include Budget Responsibility

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Leaders from the world’s largest economies pledged to reduce their budget deficits by half by 2013, and President Obama argued that a durable economic recovery must also include fiscal responsibility.

“In the United States, I’ve set a goal of cutting our deficit in half by 2013,” Obama said at a press conference June 27 in Toronto, Canada. “A number of our European partners are making difficult decisions, but we must recognize that our fiscal health tomorrow will rest in no small measure on our ability to create jobs and growth today.”

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the U.S. deficit in the last fiscal year was \$1.42 trillion, or about 10 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product, and most economists estimate the federal deficit will decline slightly in this fiscal year to approximately \$1.3 trillion.

Many of the most advanced economies — including that of the United States — chose to implement stimulus measures to reduce and shorten the most severe effects of the worldwide recession, which began in December 2007 and is widely regarded as the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The global economic crisis began to subside by mid-2009, though recovery remains fragile and severe disruptions could reverse the growth trend.

“Globally, economic contraction has given way to economic growth,” Obama said during the post-summit press conference. “Trade that had plummeted is rebounding.”

The Group of 20 leading economies held a two-day summit in Toronto, June 26-27, immediately after the Group of Eight most advanced economies met, June 25-26, at a Canadian resort outside of Toronto. The next G20 summit will be held in Seoul, South Korea, November 11-12.

The G8 advanced economies, formed in 1975, are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The G20, formed in 1999, are the G8 members plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and the European Union.

"Emerging economies in particular are seeing impressive growth. So we have pulled ourselves back from the brink and begun to move forward with economic recovery," Obama said.

Obama had been concerned that withdrawing stimulus measures too soon could weaken the recovery, which is seen as uneven and fragile as unemployment levels in many nations still remain at unacceptably high levels. The G20 countries acknowledged in a final summit declaration that to sustain the recovery, a concerted effort is necessary to follow through on existing stimulus plans, while at the same time working to create the conditions for "robust private demand" to take over the economic recovery.

The G20 nations called for programs to foster sustainable public finances and cited the need for nations to reduce by half their budget deficits by 2013 and stabilize or reduce government debt by 2016 in relation to their gross domestic product levels. Gross domestic product levels are the broadest measures of the total value of a nation's goods and services.

Obama told reporters that for a nation to have a durable economic recovery, it must also practice fiscal responsibility. "We agreed to balance the need for continued growth in the short term and fiscal sustainability in the medium term," he added.

The G20 also committed to advancing financial reform, and that included stronger regulation of the world's financial markets, which is part of a greater effort to balance the global economy and reduce sharp swings in economic activity, also known as the "boom-to-bust cycle."

The United States, Obama acknowledged, is nearing final debate on financial reform legislation that could be finished before the U.S. Congress recesses for the national July 4 holiday. The Senate and House of Representatives have finished work on legislation and are expected to vote on the final measure soon.

"To maintain momentum, we directed our teams to finalize for our meeting in Seoul a global framework to ensure that banks hold enough capital to withstand the stresses of government intervention," Obama told reporters. "Excessive risk-taking and abusive practices must be prevented."

In addition to reducing budget deficits by 2013, the G20 nations also reaffirmed a commitment to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies to encourage energy conservation, improve global energy security, reduce economically inefficient burdens on national budgets and take a major step in reducing climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions.

The G20 agreed to lead efforts to combat corruption through full implementation of the U.N. Convention against Corruption, and announced the creation of a high-level experts group to develop a full program for consideration at the November G20 Summit.

The National Space Policy

Outlines key elements of Obama's National Space Policy

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

June 28, 2010

Fact Sheet: The National Space Policy

Today, President Obama announced the administration's new National Space Policy. The National Space Policy expresses the President's direction for the Nation's space activities. The policy articulates the President's commitment to reinvigorating U.S. leadership in space for the purposes of maintaining space as a stable and productive environment for the peaceful use of all nations.

Leading Collaborative, Responsible, and Constructive Use of Space

The space age began as a race for security and prestige between two superpowers. The decades that followed have seen a radical transformation in the way we live our daily lives, in large part due to our use of space. The growth and evolution of the global economy have ushered in an ever-increasing number of nations and organizations using space to observe and study our Earth, create new markets and new technologies, support operational responses to natural disasters, enable global communications and international finance, enhance security, and expand our frontiers. The impacts of our utilization of space systems are ubiquitous, and contribute to increased transparency and stability among nations.

In a world where the benefits of space permeate almost

every facet of our lives, irresponsible acts in space can have damaging consequences for all of us. As such, all nations have a responsibility to act to preserve the right of all future generations to use and explore space. The United States is committed to addressing the challenges of responsible behavior in space, and commits further to a pledge of cooperation, in the belief that with strengthened international cooperation and reinvigorated U.S. leadership, all nations will find their horizons broadened, their knowledge enhanced, and their lives greatly improved.

Key Elements of the Administration's National Space Policy

- The United States remains committed to many long-standing tenets in space activities. The United States recognizes the rights of all nations to access, use, and explore space for peaceful purposes, and for the benefit of all humanity.
- The United States calls on all nations to share its commitment to act responsibly in space to help prevent mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust. The United States will take steps to improve public awareness of government space activities and enable others to share in the benefits of space through conduct that emphasizes openness and transparency.
- The United States will engage in expanded international cooperation in space activities. The United States will pursue cooperative activities to the greatest extent practicable in areas including: space science and exploration; Earth observations, climate change research, and the sharing of environmental data; disaster mitigation and relief; and space surveillance for debris monitoring and awareness.
- The United States is committed to a robust and competitive industrial base. In support of its critical domestic aerospace industry, the U.S. government will use commercial space products and services in fulfilling governmental needs, invest in new and advanced technologies and concepts, and use a broad array of partnerships with industry to promote innovation. The U.S. government will actively promote the purchase and use of U.S. commercial space goods and services within international cooperative agreements.
- The United States recognizes the need for stability in the space environment. The United States will pursue bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence building measures to encourage responsible actions in space, and will consider proposals and concepts for arms control measures if they are equitable, effectively verifiable, and enhance the national security of the United States and its allies. In addition, the United States will

enhance its space situational awareness capabilities and will cooperate with foreign nations and industry to augment our shared awareness in space.

- The United States will advance a bold new approach to space exploration. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration will engage in a program of human and robotic exploration of the solar system, develop new and transformative technologies for more affordable human exploration beyond the Earth, seek partnerships with the private sector to enable commercial spaceflight capabilities for the transport of crew and cargo to and from the International Space Station, and begin human missions to new destinations by 2025.

- The United States remains committed to the use of space systems in support of its national and homeland security. The United States will invest in space situational awareness capabilities and launch vehicle technologies; develop the means to assure mission essential functions enabled by space; enhance our ability to identify and characterize threats; and deter, defend, and if necessary, defeat efforts to interfere with or attack U.S. or allied space systems.

- The United States will fully utilize space systems, and the information and applications derived from those systems, to study, monitor, and support responses to global climate change and natural disasters. The United States will accelerate the development of satellites to observe and study the Earth's environment, and conduct research programs to study the Earth's lands, oceans, and atmosphere.

Good Diplomacy Involves Listening, U.S. Official Tells Youths

Global Young Leaders hear from State Department on partnership

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Effective diplomacy involves not only government-to-government engagement but a worldwide partnership on critical issues like human rights, where listening is just as important as talking, says Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Deborah Graze.

That was the point Graze, a top official in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), made June 23 as she talked to 350 international secondary school students on the duties of U.S. diplomats serving in more than 150 countries.

Graze, who has lived in four countries and visited more than 45 others on official business, said one of the greatest skills for any diplomat is "to be able to really listen, to be patient and then articulate clearly an idea to someone

who comes from a different background or culture.”

On a personal level, she said, “integrity and a clear set of principles” are important for a diplomat as well as “being well organized and composed under pressure.”

The students, from 58 nations, are part of the Global Young Leaders Conference, a leadership development program operated by the Congressional Youth Leadership Council. The council introduces U.S. and foreign students to the tradition of political leadership in the United States while helping them develop their own skills in a global context.

The State Department has hosted the conference for a number of years, and this summer is bringing the group to the department for eight visits with diplomats and civil servants who help craft and implement U.S. foreign policy.

Graze told the young leaders that DRL’s effort to encourage democracy around the world is a vital U.S. interest because countries that protect human rights and promote democracy make better partners “in getting things done in the world.”

“We can’t do everything alone,” the diplomat added. “There is a call for American leadership; that leadership must be based on the promotion of human rights and democracy ... and when countries share those values and that commitment with us, we can work together to do good elsewhere in the world.”

An important part of that process, Graze told the students, is “the [Obama] administration’s approach to human rights and promoting democracy ... based on accountability. We also hold ourselves accountable, and we actually report to the United Nations and publish on our website our commitment to international treaty obligations on human rights.”

The important point to remember, Graze said, is that the United States is not looking at other countries’ human rights practices and dictating changes. “We’re working with people already inside those countries who are seeking adherence to universal standards.”

An important function of the DRL Bureau in promoting human rights, Graze said, is “to develop and administer assistance programs that focus exclusively on helping civil society in other countries to strengthen democratic institutions and promote human rights.”

Depending on the country, the official said, this could mean helping online journalists get around censorship; ensuring that advocates for the disabled have their voice heard; or training election monitors to ensure free and fair

elections.

U.S. Welcomes Kyrgyz Referendum, Urges Reconciliation

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration commended voters and authorities in Kyrgyzstan for the peaceful and orderly June 27 constitutional referendum, which took place as scheduled after nearly two weeks of ethnic clashes, and it urged Kyrgyz citizens to use the vote to promote reconciliation and stability for their country.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley lauded the conduct of the referendum, citing a positive assessment by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on the Kyrgyzstan provisional government’s organization of “a peaceful process that allowed a high turnout,” he told reporters June 28. News reports listed turnout at near 70 percent.

Crowley said the United States also commends “the civic participation and peaceful conduct of ordinary citizens who voted without incident.”

Official results of the referendum indicated that as of June 28, with nearly all of the votes counted, 90.6 percent of voters had backed a proposed constitution that would make their country the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia. The referendum authorizes parliamentary elections for October and allows interim President Roza Otunbayeva to remain in office until after a presidential election in 2011.

Crowley called on the provisional government and Kyrgyz citizens to “use this opportunity to advance the process of reconciliation and accountability, to ensure future interethnic harmony and move Kyrgyzstan forward on a path to stability, security, democracy and prosperity for all citizens of the republic.”

He pledged that the United States, in cooperation with other partners, “will provide all appropriate support and assistance to the people and government of Kyrgyzstan in these efforts.” The United States has already committed at least \$48.3 million to Kyrgyzstan for humanitarian relief, reconstruction and community stabilization programs.

The June 27 referendum had been scheduled weeks before violence between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the south of the country erupted June 10, causing up to 400,000 people to flee their homes, including into neighboring Uzbekistan. According to press reports, up to 2,000 people may have been killed.

The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek had urged a “fair and

transparent referendum" in a June 25 statement, saying it would be "an effective step towards the reestablishment of democracy" following the April ouster of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's government and its replacement by the provisional government led by Otunbayeva.

According to a June 28 statement from the election observer mission deployed by OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, despite "evident shortcomings, the reported high turnout indicates citizens' resilience and desire to shape the future of their country."

Boris Frlec of Slovenia, who headed the OSCE mission, praised the provisional government and other authorities for organizing "a remarkably peaceful process" given "the extremely difficult environment in which the referendum took place."

"The citizens of Kyrgyzstan turned out in large numbers to vote for a new, democratic and peaceful future for their country. It is now up to all political forces to work together to improve the electoral framework ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections and build a democratic society based on respect for human rights and the rule of law," Frlec said.

The OSCE said efforts had been made to enfranchise internally displaced voters who often did not have any identification papers, but added that some in the south may have been dissuaded from voting due to a "pervasive atmosphere of fear and intimidation in parts of the south, compounded by arrests of prominent public figures of the Uzbek community."

The State Department announced June 28 that Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Eric Schwartz will arrive in Kyrgyzstan on June 29 following meetings in Uzbekistan, where he discussed the humanitarian situation of those who have been displaced by the ethnic violence.

Schwartz spoke with officials from the Uzbek government, the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. In Kyrgyzstan he is expected to meet with provisional government officials, as well as representatives of international agencies involved in the humanitarian effort.

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